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TERMS.

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COUNTY SUPERINTENDENT.

FRANCIS DWIGHT, having, on account of severe illness, and consequent debility, resigned the office of County Superintendent, Gen. RUFUS KING, of Albany, has received the appointment.

THE JOURNAL.

Will the County and Town Superintendents take an immediate and friendly interest in extending the circulation of the Journal? Would each officer send, or be responsible for but two subscriptions, it would enable its Editors to increase greatly the interest and usefulness of its pages, and relieve them from anxiety as to the means for paying its expenses.

The state appropriation is insufficient for that purpose, since in addition to the 11,000 copies required for the school districts, nearly 1,000 more are sent to the several county and town superintendents.

THE REPORTS.

We have only space to call attention to the reports and resolutions adopted by the Syracuse Convention, which occupy so large a portion of this Journal. They will be read by all, with pleasure and advantage, and must satisfy every candid mind of the beneficent influences exerted by our present admirable school organization. Their useful suggestions, just opinions, and convincing statements, challenge the closest scrutiny, and the most deliberate consideration of all interested in the advancement of social happiness.

METHODS OF TEACHING.

The committee selected to report upon Methods of Teaching respectfully submit the following:

That they deem this one of the most important subjects presented for the action of this convention, and one that lies at the very basis

of educational reform. They regard the introduction of correct systems of teaching as the most effectual means of convincing the people of the errors that have existed, and of arousing them to the efforts necessary to reform them. The practical demonstrations of the school-room are palpable and convincing; more efficient to dispel inaction, ignorance, misconception and prejudice, than all the theories, than all the arguments that can be adduced.

To place the school in a condition thus to influence its patrons is peculiarly the work of the teacher; and much prudence, sagacity and perseverance are necessary on his part in executing the important trust. To give hints and suggestions in this department is the duty of your committee—a duty at once delicate and responsible.

The field is so large that the limits of this report will preclude the occupation of only a small part of it; that portion will be selected therefore which is deemed the most important, namely, primary education.

Your committee consider the following position as generally acceded to by enlightened educators, namely: That every individual of our race is endowed with an inherent desire for knowledge; and that this hungering of the mind for mental aliment is as imperious as that of the body for necessary food. It follows, therefore, if the right course be pursued, that the acquisition of actual knowledge by the young, whether in the family, the field or the school-room, must yield delight; and such, it is believed, would be uniformly the case; if a judicious and correct system of early culture were pursued. It is believed, too, that were this so, the word TASK would be stricken from its application to lesson-getting, and that the hill of science would no longer be represented as rugged and repulsive in its ascent; and as paying the weary pilgrim for his toil only when he had reached the splendid temple which crowns its top. It is also believed that to induce pupils to advance, they need not be stimulated by proffers of gain, by fear, or by the wish to excel others; and that the common use of these incentives has been productive of infinite harm in the school education of children. Your committee believe, that much injury has resulted from the very common practice, of attempting to crowd instruction upon the mind when not in a fit state for its reception. All know the effect upon the body of urging it to take unrelished food, it but increases the loathing. The same is true of the mind when the mental appetite is dull—when it does not appreciate the mental dish urged upon it. Pressing

the mind under such circumstance to receive instruction, is the sure way to make it reject and detest it. It is a principle of our common nature to repel what is officiously obtruded upon as against our will, and to cling to that which is bestowed as a favor and held by sufferance. Instruction, instead of being *forced* upon the pupil as a *task*, should be *granted* as a *boon*. If this be judiciously done, the pupil will cling to his lesson as to the toy which he is fearful will be taken by his associate. The constant injunctions heard in our school-rooms of "tend to your books," "sit still there," &c., &c., are enough to make the most inquisitive pupil hate his lesson and the most quiet to be restless upon his seat.

Your committee are fully impressed with the opinion that the "pleasure of acquiring should be made the incentive to acquire;" and that it is the perception of *truth*, the attainment of *actual knowledge* only, which can yield this pleasure to the young or any uncontaminated mind. Letters and words, as such, are uninteresting to all children; and it is only when these letters and words are the medium of knowledge that the young mind will interest itself about them. Observe the child when engaged in reading mere *letters*. The eye is spiritless. The features devoid of any expression; and the same is apparent when unmeaning words are read. *There is no pleasure for the young being, in such employment.* But a significant, a *familiar word* gives an idea—touches the spring of thought and the whole body is at once enlivened with intellectual light.

In a course of school education the alphabet first claims attention, and upon the manner in which this and the earlier reading lessons are taught, depends in a great degree, the future *love* of the child for books and his subsequent mental action as connected with them. The first lessons should be so given as to excite thought and delight the mind; but a directly counter effect has been more commonly produced—that of stifling thought and disgusting the mind, and this mental inactivity and indifference have often been kept up so long, upon the alphabet and spelling columns, as to become a fixed habit, following the pupil through his subsequent school course.

It is suggested, therefore, that the alphabet be taught in all cases in familiar words, of not more than three letters; that the words thus selected be present, if possible, in some form to the eyes of the whole class at once. The teacher then converses with his class about the object which the word represents, and if he can, draws a plain outline of it on the black board; the letters are then named by the teacher and pupils and the word pronounced. Sometimes the *powers* of the letters are given at the same time, and this is deemed the most rational and practical way of teaching this department of Orthography. As soon as a few words are learned in this way, a short sentence is introduced, which is read and copied as before; not only in Roman, but as the pupils advance, in script also. The practice of writing the words and drawing the objects which they represent, is not only an amusement, but it furnishes also an admirable safety-valve for the egress of that buoyant energy which so commonly vents itself in mischief. The interest excited in

a class by an exercise so conducted, is truly gratifying. No difficulty whatever is found in teaching ordinary pupils of proper age, three letters a day, and your committee have known frequent instances in which the alphabet has been taught in a week and in some cases in four days by the method named.

The practice of *imitative drawing* by the younger, and perspective and landscape drawing by the more advanced pupils, is strongly recommended. The outline maps now found in most of our school-rooms, furnish admirable models for imitation. The daily practice of devoting some twenty minutes by the *whole school* to drawing certain portions of them is earnestly recommended.

Mental Arithmetic ought, in the opinion of your committee, to be a daily exercise of every pupil, whether primary or advanced. Its importance, when rightly taught, is universally admitted. It is believed, however, that to place a book on this subject in the hands of the pupil, is not the most successful method of teaching it. The teacher's mind, well stored with the principles of the "First Lessons," or some similar work, is considered as decidedly the best book for the whole school. He should draw his examples from his own mental magazine, adapt them to the capacity and taste of the pupil, and require him to work them *impromptu*. This is the manner in which mental operations are usually performed. But if a book is placed in the hands of the pupil he adopts a slow mental habit—solves his examples by counting his fingers, making marks, &c., to aid the mind. In this slow way the answer is obtained, and this is held in the memory and carried to the recitation seat rather than the solution itself. In this way mental arithmetic, as a mental discipline, is of no more value than written arithmetic.

The utility of Vocal Music is now so generally admitted, that time will not be spent upon it further than to remark that when it is practised in the schools, it should be attended to at regular and settled periods, that the pupils may know as well when the exercise of singing is to commence as that of reading or spelling.

It is believed that the spelling book is often introduced too early in the course and relied upon too exclusively. It is recommended that at least two elementary reading books be mastered by the pupil before the spelling book is placed in his hands, and that the lessons, instead of being *studied* from the book by the eye alone, be written upon slates, care being taken to preserve a perpendicular margin and horizontal lines. Spelling exercises may be profitably conducted as follows: Suppose the school to be unused to the exercise, and many in the class unable to write with facility; from two to four weeks may be devoted to writing the lessons in the place of studying them in the usual manner, and during this time, spelling may be conducted without slates. This preliminary training will generally prepare the class to write readily, and slates should now be used in spelling. The teacher pronounces the words and all write them simultaneously until the lesson is gone through with. The slates are then changed—the teacher taking a slate from the right passes it to the left of the class, while the pupils pass their slates to the right. This is done as quickly as the teacher can pass from one side of the class to

the other—each pupil has now the slate and observes the work of his neighbor. The teacher reads each word, and as errors are seen, hands are raised and corrections made by those who committed the error. This is one method, various others not differing materially from this have been successfully practised. This practice of the schools corresponds with that of society, and the pupil that is thus habituated to write his words at school will find no difficulty in writing them elsewhere.

Composition has been deplorably neglected; only about one-thirteenth of those studying grammar and one-fortieth of those of school age in the state are reported as engaged, in any way, in this important exercise. Now, a deficiency so palpable ought certainly not to exist; and the means of correcting it, even partially, are not unworthy of enquiry.

For the tyro to write a composition is always a hated task; one in which none but a persuasive and indefatigable teacher can induce him to engage. Yet he may be drawn into the practice of writing sentences upon familiar topics without any difficulty, and he will find in it actual amusement. A large number of schools could be referred to, in which all the pupils, over six years of age, are engaged daily in this exercise; and in many where it has been continued for some two years, the pupils will write very well and without any reluctance upon any subject about which they can converse. The trouble in teaching composition, in most instances, it is thought, has been that the pupil has been urged to produce compound and connected sentences before he could write even simple ones, and he became discouraged of course. He has also attempted to write upon topics of which he knew but little, and all he could do, therefore, was to read about them, and to copy not only the sentiment, but often the phraseology read. This, although it may be reported as composition, is nevertheless a perfect farce. If the practice of constructing sentences, could be introduced into all the common schools of the state, instead of there being as now only ten thousand in composition, there would soon be twenty times that number, and the immense time now wasted upon English grammar would then be of some practical benefit.

A brief notice of Geography will close this report. It is believed that too many particulars are required to be recited by the student in this science, and that much more abiding and available geographical knowledge would be obtained in less time if the attention were confined to fewer topics. The great multiplicity of questions serve only to confuse the pupil and to prevent his receiving distinct and permanent impressions. The lesson of to-day is learned and recited, but is crowded from its place by that of to-morrow; and this alternative throwing in and crowding out—this *pop-gun* system, is kept up for years, and yet but a few distinct impressions—the bolder features—remain. Would it not have been better to have confined attention to those bolder features at first, and thus have saved the time of the pupil?

In teaching geography, the following course is confidently recommended: That the pupil, in all cases, commence with what is familiar—with his own town, for instance; that the first thing to be done is to draw the outline of the

country from the map, until it can be produced from memory. The next step is to draw the prominent rivers, canals, mountains, &c., within such outline until these too can be drawn from memory. The location of towns next follows, and with these the same course is pursued. A specific number of objects is always given for a lesson, and generally all but a few of the younger pupils engage in the exercise. As soon as a class can draw a map of a country in this way, they learn a description of it, and not before. The description is thus connected with a distinct image already fixed in the mind by the impressive act of drawing, and the picture, and the description of it are so tied together by the laws of mental association that they afterwards remain connected. The picture can be called to mind at pleasure and the description of it will follow in most cases with the freshness of an original impression.

Your committee have thus presented their views of the manner of teaching some of the elementary departments of instruction; they have chosen to submit practical suggestions rather than theoretical discussions as more serviceable to the teacher and through him to the school, and with the same view they beg leave respectfully to offer the following resolutions:

Resolved, That permanent attention should be given to the means of qualifying teachers, to introduce correct methods of instruction, and that we deem the Normal School and the County Institutes as eminently conducive to this end.

Resolved, That as the subsequent progress and mental activity of the pupil greatly depend upon the "first impressions" made at school, care should therefore be taken to excite the curiosity and to address the understanding, and for this purpose in teaching the alphabet familiar words should be chosen to the exclusion of single letters, the "abs" and unmeaning combinations.

Resolved, That in connexion with the alphabet and elementary reading, should also be taught mental arithmetic, imitative drawing, writing upon slates, and if possible, the practice of vocal music.

Resolved, That facility in the construction of our language can be attained only by regular and continued practice, and that therefore the daily construction of sentences in all our schools by those who can write, be earnestly recommended.

Resolved, That in the opinion of this convention, Geography can best be taught by the aid of outline maps; and by drawing the outlines of states and countries, the location of towns, the course of rivers, &c., and that this method be recommended to general adoption in the Common Schools of the State.

E. G. STORKE,
ELIJAH POWELL,
R. H. SPENCER.

Committee.

REPORT ON MORAL INSTRUCTION.

The committee to whom the subject of Moral Instruction was referred, beg leave to submit the following brief report:

It is not because the subject is of minor importance that the committee are not disposed to swell the dimensions of their report, but of its great importance and of their little hope of be-

ing able to present one that will meet the minds of this body.

Moral education consists in a knowledge of what is right and what is wrong. The standard of this right and wrong is the will of God. But here the coincidence of our opinions stops. Dissimilar are the answers given to the question, "How is the will of God discovered?" It therefore becomes a question of very great interest, and we forbear to pursue it further, lest it should appear that there is more than one source from which it is derived. To impart Moral Instruction, two things are necessary, viz: information of what is right and wrong should be laid before the young in a manner adapted to their capacity; and they should be furnished with incentives which will induce them to pursue the former and shun the latter. The practical moral education that the youth receive at school is acquired from the actions, opinions and general example of their teachers. They adopt the notions of their instructors and acquire insensibly a similar set of principles and a similar scale of right and wrong. Hence, unless the teacher possess a good moral character and pay homage to virtue and morality, unless he possess honesty, truth, temperance and kindness, it is manifest that the youth under his charge will be taught amiss. It is, therefore, important that children be placed in a situation in which the knowledge and practice of morality shall be inculcated by the habitually virtuous conduct of those whom they are to copy.

The child that is placed in such a situation is in an efficient moral school. Although the child may unavoidably be subjected to bad example and much that is immoral elsewhere, yet if its parents, who are the natural moral instructors, possess a moral character and disposition, the child will effectually resist the insinuation of evil.

The judicious teacher will often find that the moral culture of his pupils may be promoted without seeming to have the object in view. There are many opportunities which daily present themselves for associating virtue with their affection—for weaving in among the many accumulating mental habits, principles of rectitude which shall pervade and meliorate the whole. Teachers should always check the appearance of obstinacy in their pupils, and the sallies of passion; impress the deepest, most amiable, reverential and awful sense of God, a future state, and of all things sacred.

In endeavoring to attain these ends, there is one great pervading difficulty—consisting in the imperfection and impurity of the actual moral condition of mankind. Your committee entertain the belief that the subject of moral instruction is not looked upon with that high regard and veneration which it demands—and in conclusion, present the following resolutions for the consideration of the convention:

Resolved, That in imparting moral instruction, the first great requisite is to be moral ourselves.

Resolved, That while we regard the Bible as the text-book of morals, we recognize the incidental manifestations of immorality, arising during the session of the school, as the most effectual and appropriate occasions for imparting

moral instruction, which should be embraced by the teacher for that purpose,

D. R. RANDALL,
H. H. INGRAHAM,
E. S. SHUMWAY,
Committee.

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE CHARACTER AND DEPARTMENT OF TEACHERS.

The Committee, to whom was referred the subject of the *Character and Department of Teachers*, would respectfully report:

That, knowing as they do, the imitative character of children, and the almost omnipotent power of teachers, in implanting principles, and moulding the minds and forming the habits of the rising generation, they cannot but regard the subject referred to them, as one of paramount interest.

If it is a truism that "like priest, like people," so is that other saying equally true, that "as is the teacher, so will be the school." The teacher puts the impress of his own character and deportment upon his scholars. No surer is it, that the die leaves its own impress on the coin, than does the teacher plant his own principles, habits and manners upon the child. And they are even more imperishable; for the coin will wear away, and the characters be obliterated; but the mind will live forever. It is said there is a kind of ink which when first written with, is so pale as to be scarcely visible: but by age, grows blacker and blacker, until it becomes so black, that you may burn the material on which it is written, and the words can be traced in the cinders. Such is the influence of the teacher. He teaches by *example* as effectually as by *precept*. Exerting then, an influence so powerful, so extensive and so permanent, "what a model of a man ought a teacher to be!"

That the teacher of a district school should be noted for strict moral honesty, unbending integrity, and purity of character, few, at this day, doubt. That his principles should be such as the scholars may safely adopt—that his language such as they may repeat, and his habits such as they may imitate, is also admitted by all who have reflected on the all-controlling influence of the teacher.

The teacher of a school, in a country district, is usually considered a model for *all* to imitate. He not only forms the minds, tastes and principles of his *scholars*; but exerts a powerful influence on all the youth of the district. "The teacher does this, or says that," is a sufficient reason why others should do the same.

Moral character, and that unsullied, and even above suspicion, is absolutely requisite for a teacher of youth. Man, mentally and physically educated, without moral principles, is a tiger unchained. He will prey upon all with whom he comes in contact. The state has constituted a good moral character, as essential in all teachers who would share in the public bounty. The state has done its duty in this matter; but too many officers have neglected theirs. Too many teachers are yet found in our schools who have not that scrupulous regard for truth—those fixed principles of right and wrong, which a teacher ought to possess. They are instilling their own loose principles and immoral practices into the

minds of the young, while their characters are in a forming state. The sly jeer, the vulgar jest, are just as effectual in poisoning the minds of children, as the bold scoff and the open railing against all that is good or virtuous.

The great object of education should be, to make men better and happier—fit them for duties here and happiness hereafter. And as all experience as well as Revelation declares "that the way of the transgressor is hard"—that "the wicked are like the troubled sea that cannot rest"—and that "there is no peace to the wicked:" then, to make men happier and better, they must be taught to be virtuous. And they must be taught *young* too, for it is written by inspiration, "can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may he learn to do good who has long been accustomed to do evil." And it must be taught in our *common schools*; for here the *mass* of the people are educated. And he that would be a successful teacher of ethics, must *practice* what he preaches. No lesson of fine-spun morality will leave any salutary effect on the scholars, if they do not see the doctrine exemplified in the conduct of their teacher.

Children should be taught in our common schools, benevolence, kindness, generosity, and forgiveness of injuries.

The soil of the human heart produces, without cultivation, a luxuriant growth of selfishness, unkindness, avarice and hatred. These noxious plants must be eradicated by the teacher. And they should be removed early, when first visible, before they have taken deep root; and other plants, which will produce better fruit, be placed in their stead.

The natural heart of man is fitly compared to the earth since the curse of God rested upon it. Weeds, thorns and thistles spring from the ground spontaneously, and grow luxuriantly without cultivation. But to produce that which is adapted to man's wants, the earth must be tilled, the seed sown, and much labor and toil expended to bring it to maturity. So with the heart of man; all the wrong principles and vile passions spring up unbidden and flourish exceedingly, without cultivation; but to produce any virtuous or holy principles, requires constant and laborious efforts. This the teacher should understand, and make those unwearied efforts which are adapted to produce these desirable results. He should give "line upon line, precept upon precept," and above, and more than all, he should exemplify in his own person these heavenly graces.

But there is another branch of the subject referred to your committee which we deem of scarcely less importance, and which is too frequently entirely overlooked.

The *deportment* of a school teacher—his personal appearance—his habits—his address, and every thing connected with his manners, are not trifling matters in the qualification of a teacher. For, let a teacher be possessed of intellectual knowledge, and even moral honesty; yet if he is uncouth, slovenly, or in the habit of violating the ordinary principles of decorum, it destroys in a great measure his usefulness.

The teacher should be neat in his personal appearance; he never should permit himself to go into school in a slovenly slip-shod attire. Some teachers seem to feel, because they have none

but *children* in the school, it is not necessary to pay any attention to their dress or manners. But the truth is, that the children imitate the teacher in all things. *Extremes*, also, should be avoided. The teacher should equally shun the example of the dandy and the sloven. The teacher should be comely in his appearance, neat in his apparel, and a perfect gentleman in his school.

The *address* of a teacher is also important. His language should be kind, and his manners conciliatory and pleasing. An abrupt, harsh, or fretful manner in answering the questions of scholars or parents, is well calculated to destroy all his usefulness.

The teacher should be correct and pure in his language. No vulgar expression or *cockneyism* should ever escape his lips. Your committee have often been pained, when visiting schools, at the frequent use, by the teacher, of cant phrases, vulgar terms, and opprobrious epithets, such as serve to *belittle* the language, cultivate impure thoughts, and implant coarse and brutal passions. Instead of this, the words that fall from the lips of the teacher, should be pure, elevated and kind. His object should be to *elevate* the language of the scholars; not degrade it. His words should be culled with care, and the choicest only used. He must remember that water in a receiver, will not rise higher than the fountain; and that the scholars will seldom use better language than their teacher.

The teacher should always *mean* what he says. The scholars should learn that the teacher *always* speaks the truth. Many teachers are in the constant habit of *threatening* their scholars with punishment for violations of their rules, when they *intend* to do no such thing. The first case of this kind that the teacher is guilty of, is followed by loss of confidence and respect of the scholars. They see that their teacher is not a man of his word—that he threatens and does not perform—in short, that he has been guilty of falsehood. This course soon results in anarchy and confusion.

The teacher should not be *fretful*. Our mental and physical frames are so intimately connected, and are influenced by so many circumstances, that we cannot always feel alike. We are irritable at times—every thing goes wrong, and every body does wrong; and woe be to the urchin who comes within reach of the irritable teacher's rod or ferule. Severe mental or physical toil, deprivation of sleep, or certain states of the atmosphere, produce nervous irritability. Teachers under this morbid state should be very careful how they act. They should *strive* to wear a pleasant countenance, make use of kind and cheerful language, even though they feel the reverse. The scholars should not be able to "read the day's disasters in the morning's face." Scholars act as spies upon their teacher. Every word, look or action is criticised. And although teachers may not feel that,

"A chiel's among them taking notes,
And faith he'll print 'em;"

Yet they may consider themselves as extremely fortunate, if they escape without condemnation for every wrong they commit. Children soon learn to distinguish right from wrong. They have a quick perception of injury or partiality. Teachers should study their own physical being,

so as to be able to detect the difficulty, and apply the remedy.

A gentlemanly and polite manner in his intercourse, with both parents and scholars, is requisite and important in a teacher. Good breeding adds much to the pleasures of social life, and is always a passport to respectable society. It is an ever present letter of introduction. This ought then to be taught in our common schools. And it cannot be successfully taught, unless it is *practised* by the teacher.

The advocates and patrons of select schools, give as a reason for their course, that the children in *common schools* contract vicious practices and vulgar habits; that no attention is paid to manners or morals; nothing done to elevate and refine the minds of the scholars or improve their manners. This ought not to be. The teacher of the district school should be as refined and polished in his manners, as the teacher of the more select school; and he should be even more assiduous to improve his scholars in these respects.

Teachers of youth should not contract vulgar or filthy habits—chewing or smoking tobacco, taking snuff, or any such disgusting practice ought to be avoided by him, who is held up as a pattern for the youth of the land. Too many teachers are in the habit of using this filthy weed; and boys, thinking it manly to imitate the teacher, strive to become masters of the art. One of your committee has found school-houses so full of tobacco smoke, as to make it almost impossible to breathe in them; and one teacher was so addicted to the practice, as to smoke even during school hours. These habits, when once formed, become “second nature”—the victims, like the victims of alcohol, find themselves bound as with fetters of brass.

That these practices are of no use—do not increase the happiness or improve the health of any; but that they are in most cases positively injurious to health, and in all cases expensive, inconvenient, filthy and disgusting, all are ready to admit. Grave bodies of clergymen have been refused admittance into some of our best furnished churches, to transact business, on account of the prevalence of this loathsome practice among them. Many of our country churches look like the bar-room of some low tavern, by the use of this weed. No place is too pure, no temple too holy to escape pollution from the tobacco chewer. The common bar-room, the private dwelling, and even the sanctuary of the living God, equally give evident tokens of his presence. And the evil is wide-spread. We are called “a nation of *spitters*.” Who shall set about reform? Who can be as successful as those who implant principles, and form the tastes and habits of the young? Let the practice be abandoned by teachers, let them use their influence to prevent their scholars from forming the habit, and let them show its expense, its inconvenience and its disgusting features, and the evil would soon be greatly lessened.

Then let the teachers remember that though their precepts and example may at first be confined to a small circle; yet like the ripple made by the falling of a pebble into the waters of a placid lake, they will grow broader and broader,

long after he is forgotten, and time is swallowed up in eternity.

With this imperfect view of the subject, the committee would recommend, for the consideration of the convention, the following resolutions:

Resolved, That high moral sentiments are absolutely requisite in those who have the teaching of the children of the land: so that their practice as well as their precepts may instruct.

Resolved, That teachers should be more assiduous than has heretofore been the general practice, in inculcating moral principles; such as reverence of God, obedience to law, justice, benevolence, kindness and mercy.

Resolved, That teachers ought to possess that genteel deportment, and that suavity of manners which will enable them to teach the principles of good breeding, by example as well as by precept.

Resolved, That every practice or habit, inconsistent with strict propriety and decorum, should be at once and forever abandoned by teachers and superintendents of common schools, and they should use their influence to prevent children from forming any; so that the next generation may grow up not only intellectual and virtuous; but polished and refined.

ALBERT WRIGHT,
N. TIDD,
F. P. MOULTON,
Committee.

REPORT OF COMMITTEE ON MAPS, &c.

The Committee on Comparison of Maps, Drawings and Penmanship, report—

That they have examined the numerous specimens submitted to their inspection as carefully as the limited time allowed to them would admit.

They have been pleased as well as surprised, at the high station attained by our common schools, as shown by this interesting exhibition. Where so many have done so well they find it difficult to award a premium.

The maps and drawings executed in the public schools of the city of New-York, for number and variety, as well as for general neatness and finish, are perhaps deserving of the first place.

Your committee cannot give, in detail, the various specimens which they consider worthy of notice.

They, however, feel bound to make mention of some few of the many schools which are deserving of high credit for the excellence of their performances.

From the New-York schools they would particularly notice:

- 1st. The Maps exhibited by No. 11.
- 2d. The Maps with geological drawings from No. 10.
- 3d. The Maps from Nos. 4 and 5.
- 4th. The drawings and pencillings from No. 12, and from No. 16.
- 5th. The drawings, maps and specimens of penmanship from the colored school.

The finest specimens of landscape pencillings were exhibited by common school No. 1; Camillus. There were also well executed maps from the same town.

A splendid portable Globe was executed by the scholars of District No. 10, Skaneateles.

Also, well drawn maps by schools of that town.

Drawings by girls from 9 to 12 years of age, from Albany county, were highly creditable.

Outline maps, well executed, were exhibited from Tompkins county.

Several fine maps from the Albany city schools, and a map of the town of Guilderland, Albany county. This map is deserving of particular notice for its careful execution, and for another peculiarity; all the School Districts are delineated, and a map of every town in the State of a similar description would afford a more perfect chart of the State than is at present to be found.

Your committee would say in conclusion, that they feel gratified and proud of the present position of our schools, and they confidently expect that the day is near at hand, when through the length and breadth of the state, it shall no longer be necessary to go beyond the walls of our common schools to acquire a thorough acquaintance with these highly useful and ornamental branches, as well as all the substantial parts of a good education.

Resolved, That at the next annual convention we each pledge ourselves to produce ten specimens of maps and drawings from our respective counties, for comparison with each other.

W. S. WETMORE,
S. I. FERGUSON,
J. HOBBS.

DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF INHABITANTS.

The committee to whom was referred the subject of the Duties and Responsibilities of Inhabitants, beg leave respectfully to report

That they have bestowed upon the subject committed to them by the convention, such attention as time and circumstances have permitted, if not such as its vast importance would require.

It would be presumption in them, within the limits to which they must be restricted, to do more than present in a desultory and superficial way, a few considerations which may perhaps be not altogether inappropriate in connexion with the subject, nor perhaps wholly unproductive of good to the community.

It is for the inhabitants and their children that schools are established and sustained. In these primary institutions the great body of our people receive, and must in all probability continue to receive whatever of rudimental instruction may fall to their lot. The importance, therefore, of making them as efficient and useful as possible, need be enforced upon this convention by no words of ours.

What then must be the duties and responsibilities of inhabitants in respect to their schools? Nay, rather what must they not be? What degree of pains taking, of anxious attention, and benevolent exertion, is not to be fully justified by the greatness of the object.

Natural affection, as well as the authoritative monitions of conscience, require that the rising generation should be cared for, cherished and sustained by those who have attained to manhood. So far as the sustenance and comfort of the body are concerned, this duty toward the young—except in rare cases of deplorable delinquency—is not neglected. But in regard to

the mind and its higher wants, no such general provision is made, although neglect in this respect is productive of such disastrous results. Happy indeed would it be if the assiduous care which parents bestow upon the bodily and outward interests of their children could be extended to their mind!

But your committee must refrain from everything like a general discussion of so wide a subject. They therefore, content themselves by submitting to your indulgence, a few remarks upon topics of obvious practical bearing upon the relation which inhabitants sustain to their schools. First. Your committee advert to the great duty of harmony and concession among such inhabitants. We are constantly compelled to witness, with feelings of painful regret, how matters of subordinate importance are permitted to become the occasion of protracted and bitter differences in districts, always to the prejudice, and often to the destruction of all usefulness and happiness connected with the schools. Where many are to be consulted, there will of course be difference of opinion, and difference of interest. The building of school-houses, the change of their sites, the alteration of districts, and many other matters of district business, are allowed too often to become a fountain of bitter waters. Your committee are aware that this is a subject exceedingly difficult practically to reach, but they respectfully submit that county and town superintendents, by a kind, firm, and impartial deportment, can do much to allay the irritations which unavoidably arise, and often to prevent, in a great degree, the evils likely to result therefrom. There must needs be harmony, if any other good is expected or desired.

Trusting that they shall not encroach upon a province which does not belong to them, your committee would refer in the next place to the character and condition of school-houses, in connexion with the question of the duties and responsibilities of inhabitants, as well as an indication of the degree of faithfulness with which those responsibilities and duties are met. As a matter of experience, your committee can testify, that wherever they have found a commodious school-house, well furnished with apparatus and proper appointments within, and with play-grounds without, there they have not failed to find also, a corresponding spirit on the part of the inhabitants, of faithful regard for their duty and responsibility. A school-house of such description, is at once a cause and evidence of interest in the district. It becomes a matter of just pride—is shown to strangers as such, and is visited by its proprietors with gratification and satisfaction. But when the school-house is in that other condition, unfortunately too common; when to original worthlessness are superadded dilapidation, neglect and decay, full sure may we be of a deplorable want on the part of the inhabitants, of all proper sense of both the duties and obligations which spring from the relations which they sustain to each other. That our houses for primary instruction may speedily be made to afford a more creditable indication of the state of public feeling in regard to the proper end and aim of school district organization, is the sincere desire of your committee, in which they are sure the convention and all friends of education will cordially concur.

Your committee will take time to advert to one other particular in relation to this subject. They refer to the great and important duty of visitation by the inhabitants, of the schools where their children are receiving instruction. But in regard to this topic, which has received much discussion in the public press, and elsewhere, and which has become somewhat trite, though by no means unimportant, your committee do not deem it incumbent upon them to dwell at length. They have only to express their high sense of the indispensable importance of such visitations, and to add, that no supposed or real lack of ability to form a critical judgment concerning the course of instruction, or the proficiency of the pupils, should for a moment be admitted as an excuse for the neglect of this great and important duty. That is not the way in which common sense directs our people to conduct their private business. Does the farmer, who employs an architect to erect a dwelling for himself and family, wholly absent himself from the building during the progress of its construction? Does he, because not himself an artisan, feel justified in bestowing no thoughts or glance upon the labors of those whom he has employed for such a purpose? By no means. Well does every practical man know that his presence, and the manifestation of his interest, are not only beneficial, but indispensable. And yet, how much is it to be deplored, that a like rule of common sense does not more extensively prevail in respect to schools—where not the outward dwelling, but in a great degree, the character, moral, social and intellectual, is built up—where the plastic mind of youth is to receive an impress and form for weal or for woe, durable as the unending ages of its being.

Your committee beg leave to say a word upon the duties of inhabitants in regard to teachers. It is a lamentable fact, that the selection of instructors is too generally left in blind trust, with those officers of the district whose business it is to make the legal contract. How often is it that the only question asked, is one which betokens merely a sordid desire for pecuniary saving? Before that pregnant inquiry "how much does he ask a month?" all considerations of his moral and intellectual character, all curiosity in respect to his fitness to instruct, and all solicitude in regard to the effect of his conversation and his manners upon their children, fall into the shade. No words are needed to impress a deep reprobation of such criminal indifference, or to excite in all philanthropic minds, an earnest wish for its reformation.

Your committee might speak of many other indications which, unhappily, are too obvious, of a want of that due appreciation of the duties and responsibilities of inhabitants which is necessary to the proper discharge of the same, but they forbear to claim the time of the convention for that purpose.

The duty of the inhabitants of a school district, is beyond all question, by every means in their power, to render the school where their children must be taught, an instrument of the greatest possible good. They are to see that it is fitted to confer upon their offspring, right and true instruction. They require to provide, not for the mechanical acquisition of a certain amount of knowledge, falsely so called; not that

the youth shall learn the contents of certain books, to be forgotten as soon as learnt, and to be useless while remembered; but they are bound to provide instruction fitted to kindle the latent, living spark of intelligence in the human breast, into a flame which shall warm, animate and illuminate, the individual being through every step of its future progress. They are under obligation to provide a school in which the young mind shall be made a self-instructor; so that when the sway of the schoolmaster shall cease, and the admonition of parental care be no longer heard,—each individual for himself, may be enabled to travel without a guide, and with onward step and upturned face over the great field of human knowledge, trusting under Providence in the cultivated resources of his own soul.

Your committee, anxious to suggest, if possible, some expedient to enkindle more regard on the part of inhabitants, for the proper discharge of their duties and responsibilities, ask leave to submit the following resolutions:

Resolved, That this convention, viewing with profound regret, the indifference prevailing among a large portion of the people, in regard to the character and proper management of district schools, do hereby recommend, as one mode of exciting interest, and consequently right action, the holding of county, town, or neighborhood celebrations of common schools, at convenient intervals, where the whole population, so far as practicable may be convened, to witness the proficiency of the pupils, and the qualifications and skill of the teachers.

Resolved, That we have observed with exceeding gratification, in many parts of the state, the good effect which such celebrations have produced in calling the attention of our people to the great subject of juvenile instruction, as well as in presenting the public with an opportunity, in some degree, to test the qualifications of teachers, and we commend these celebrations as being well calculated to impress inhabitants with a sense of both their duties and their responsibilities.

ALEXANDER MANN,
ALEXANDER FONDA,
LEWIS R. PALMER,
Committee.

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON VOCAL MUSIC.

The committee, to whom was referred the subject of vocal music, ask leave respectfully to report:

That, from the fact, that the practice of vocal music, in our common schools, meets with almost universal favor, it needs no labored argument to prove its utility.

The committee are not prepared to go so far as to say that "he that hath no music in his soul is fit for treason, stratagem, and crimes;" yet they will say, that should such a being ever be found, who had no music in his soul, they fully believe it is to be found in every human voice, and that where there is no organic defect, every person can be learned to sing. In this opinion the committee believe they are sustained by most, if not all, those who have long practised, and become eminent as teachers of the science of music; and if the sacred influences of music

upon the human heart, are such as have been represented by those who must be the best judges of its tendencies, why should it not be practised in all the schools and families in the land?

Your committee believe that no well founded objections can exist against it, and the time cannot be far distant when the seven hundred thousand children, now in the schools of this state, and all others that shall enter them hereafter, will be allowed the privilege of indulging in this most pleasing and profitable exercise. If we are to judge from the history of the last three years, that time is very near at hand. From the first annual report of the county superintendents to the State Department, it appears that but two counties in the state reported any number of scholars that had practised vocal music in the schools the preceding year, and that number was very small. From the third annual report of the county superintendents the number reported as having been taught vocal music the preceding year, was nearly 50,000. All this has been accomplished within the short space of two years! Should the number increase in the same proportion during the passing year—before its close—more than 100,000 of the children of this state, will have been made happier, and we believe better, by indulgence in the practice of vocal music.

From the benefits already derived by the practice of vocal music in our common schools, and from the still greater good it may be made to accomplish, the committee without further reasons for it, conclude by offering the following resolution:

Resolved, That in all proper ways we will use our influence in favor of the introduction of vocal music into all our common schools, and in order to bring about so desirable an object as soon as possible, we recommend that it be practised in all our county institutes—that the teachers attending may become qualified to give instruction in the same.

FLAVEL B. SPRAGUE,
R. H. SPENCER,
J. T. BRODT,

Committee.

COUNTY AND TOWN ASSOCIATIONS.

The committee on County and Town Associations respectfully report as follows:

Although every instrumentality which conduces to the elevation of the common school, becomes in the enlightened application of generous minds, a subject of serious importance, the committee would intimate a difference in this respect between those agencies which aim in common with others to effect a single object, and those that subserve many purposes. Some, at least, being peculiar and exclusive. That associations of the kind under consideration, belong to the latter class, no stronger evidence can be adduced than that they have been appropriately referred to by several committees, and included by them in the means proposed, for promoting the objects respectively entrusted to their consideration. The benignity and power of their influence in harmonizing the efforts of teachers, and in awakening a proper interest on the part of inhabitants, have been presented in the able reports on these subjects already adopted by the convention. But there is another service they may be made to render, in which

no other tried means promise to be equally efficient; and that is, in correcting popular misapprehensions in reference to the real design and tendency of the school system. It cannot have escaped the notice of any one charged with the supervision of schools, that the objections and prejudices against the system are as various and dissimilar as the persons entertaining them. Now, in the opinion of the committee, these objections can never be fully met and these prejudices eradicated, until they are presented in a definite and tangible form, and no means afford equal facilities for this purpose, with town and county associations. If, as is frequently alleged, that the opposition to the system is founded in misconceptions of its true character, the full and free discussion which these associations invoke and secure, will assuredly correct those erroneous impressions, and the system will pass from the ordeal brightened and strengthened in all its parts. They will conduce most happily to that unity of effort and concurrence of sentiment indispensable to the greatest success of the educational enterprise. Entertaining these views, the committee would offer for the adoption of the convention the following resolution:

Resolved, That we consider county and town common school associations as among the most powerful agencies for correcting popular misapprehensions in regard to our school system, and for effecting unity of purpose and harmony of action among the guardians of popular instruction; and that we will use our best endeavors to form and sustain them in the towns and counties of our respective charge.

S. SYLVESTER,
E. W. CURTIS,
IRA BELLOW.

Committee.

REPORT OF COMMITTEE ON THE DUTIES AND POWERS OF TOWN SUPERINTENDENTS OF SCHOOLS.

The committee charged with the consideration of the powers and duties of "Town Superintendents," deeply regret the necessity that precludes the full expression of their views on this important department of the common school system.

Their *legal powers* are distinctly defined in the statute that abolished the offices of commissioners and inspectors of common schools, and devolved the responsibilities of their supervision and control upon a single individual in each town. Their *moral power* is commensurate with the interests intrusted to their charge, and their beneficial agency in renovating, sustaining and improving the common schools in the state, your committee believe, has not always been duly appreciated. When their hearts have been engaged in the momentous duties assigned them, and they have secured the co-operation of the other parties concerned in the onward march of general education, our schools have prospered, and bright and lasting benefits have accrued to community. It is their prerogative to counsel with and sustain the county superintendents in the exercise of their arduous duties, to advise with district officers in relation to their local interests, to encourage and enlighten teachers; and with kind paternal care to cherish the dawning purposes of the juvenile mind to acquire knowledge, practice the social virtues and

reverence the obligations of religion. We beg leave to present the following resolution:

Resolved, That the various and important duties of town superintendents and their influence on the dearest and most enduring interests of community, clearly indicate the necessity of their selection, solely in reference to their fitness for the office, irrespective of political or minor considerations.

A. EDWARDS,
A. FONDA,
A. T. HOPKINS,
Committee.

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE.

The committee to whom was referred the subject of agriculture, connected with the educational interests of the state, respectfully report:

That the matter assigned them has been duly considered, in all its bearings—but the examination has failed to satisfy them of the propriety of incorporating agriculture, or other branches designed to meet the wants of specific professions, in the studies of the common school.

The education of the common school is that development of man, which is common to the whole family of humanity. The knowledge of agriculture, therefore, being identified with class, cannot legitimately form a part of the instruction of our ordinary schools.

The following resolution is, in accordance with these views, laid before the convention:

Resolved, That this convention entertains the opinion that, while a knowledge of the general principles of chemistry, and their general application, is important to the scholar, the knowledge of an *extended*, specific application of said principles does not come within the province of the common school.

The following was offered by Mr. Dwight and adopted:

Whereas the interest of the agriculturist is identified with the interest of our common schools—therefore

Resolved, That we will test the practicability and expediency of introducing agricultural chemistry, by securing instruction in this important subject in at least two districts in every county of the state.

THALES LINDSLEY,
A. H. DUNHAM,
M. McKENZIE, } *Committee.*

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON SCHOOL APPARATUS.

Mr. WILLIAM WRIGHT, from the committee to whom was referred the subject of common school apparatus, begs leave respectfully to report, that the committee have had the subject matter referred to them under consideration, and have bestowed upon it all that attention which the brief space of time allotted, and the other engagements devolved upon them, would permit.

The committee can scarcely believe that, in a convention like this, so brief in its sittings, and yet so burdened with business;—or upon a subject upon which there can scarcely be *but one opinion*, a very elaborate report is either expected or desired: And yet perhaps the peculiar relations which this body sustains to our common schools, and the increased importance which

attaches itself to this whole subject, at this particular juncture, demand that something should be said upon it.

We start therefore with the assumption of this principle, that all human knowledge is received through the medium of our senses—but that these senses are capable, and do convey matter of thought to the mind, in very different degrees of force, both in respect to the clearness of conception and indelibility of impression.

The eye, widest in its range, and most delicate in its perceptions, every one knows is a much more accurate instrument for the acquisition of knowledge than the ear, and that impressions made through the medium of this organ, are more vivid in their inception—lasting in their nature—and controlling in their influence, than those made through the medium of any of the other of our senses: And farther, it is believed to be an admitted fact, that there are many important truths which may be communicated to the mind, by a mere *glance of the eye*, which *hours* of description would still leave exceedingly *vague and indefinite*, if indeed, it could make even the slightest *correct impression*: While there are other facts and truths equally important, which can be addressed to the mind *only through the medium of this organ*.

The doctrine that we must "teach by precept rather than by example" has, I trust, already been exploded, not only in relation to the great subject of *moral training*, but also upon that of *intellectual culture*. So that it may now safely be assumed, that any system of education, which does not recognize the principle of ocular demonstration as its *basis* and *superstructure* too, is radically defective.

In relation to the proper training and development of the young and tender mind, these truths assume an additional and paramount importance. When we recollect the eagerness with which children examine,—the readiness with which they read,—and the promptness with which they conceive, as well as the fidelity with which they retain all those great and important truths which are communicated to their minds through pictorial illustrations, we cannot but see and *feel* too, the great importance of this subject.

It has been said "let me write the ballads of a nation, and I care not who may make her laws;" so we, with equal, if not greater propriety may say, "let us make the *pictures* of a nation and we care not who may write her ballads."

Did time permit us, it might easily be shown that these well known and settled principles, are applicable not only to objects of nature and art—but that they are also applicable to both spoken and written language:—for, inasmuch as words are recognized only as the representatives of ideas—and as ideas are the images of objects impressed upon the mind—so it might easily be shown that most of these images may be represented upon the canvas. But your committee are aware that, however pleasing and profitable might be the full prosecution of this subject, neither the time nor the circumstances under which this convention is assembled, will warrant that prosecution at this time.

Without then going farther into detail, upon a subject which your committee cannot but believe must commend itself to the warm approbation

of every member of this convention, we cannot refrain from expressing our strong and decided opinion, that the general and speedy introduction of appropriate apparatus, for the illustration of the various truths and principles of science taught in our common schools, by an appeal to the eye, is a measure of vital importance to the success of the great work of educational reform in which the friends of popular education in this state are now so ardently and devotedly engaged. Your committee, therefore, without assuming to make invidious distinctions between the merits of the different classes and grades of school apparatus which have been submitted to their examination, would content themselves with simply recommending the passage of the following resolutions, viz.:

Resolved, 1st, That this convention highly recommend the introduction of appropriate school apparatus into all our common schools—and to facilitate the acquisition of this important attainment, we respectfully suggest to the inhabitants of the several school districts of the state, the propriety of their immediately availing themselves of the provisions of our present school laws, by appropriating their library funds in accordance with that law, to the purchase of such apparatus.

2d. *Resolved*, That among the several articles of school apparatus deemed by this convention particularly appropriate to be introduced into our common schools for the purposes of illustration, black-boards, outline maps, charts, globes, geometrical blocks and diagrams, numerical frames, drawing cards, &c., &c., may be mentioned as among the most important.

3d. *Resolved*, That we recommend to trustees and patrons of our schools, to be cautious in purchasing school apparatus, text and library books for their schools, purporting to be sanctioned by the officers of the state department of common schools, or of county or town superintendents; without the written or printed evidence of the fact that such recommendations of apparatus or works have been given by such school officers.

WILLIAM WRIGHT,
J. T. BRODT,
CHA'S. SENTELL, } Committee.

REPORT ON SCHOOL DISTRICT LIBRARIES.

The committee to whom was referred the subject of school district libraries, would respectfully report:

That the very little time which the committee have been enabled to bestow upon the subject, has not been sufficient to do it anything like justice.

Your committee believe that there have been very few, if any laws enacted by our legislature, which have so important a bearing on the interests of the rising generation, the influence of which will be so widespread, so deep and so permanent, as that law establishing a library of well selected books, to be placed within the reach of every citizen and child of the state. The idea was grand in its conception, commendable in its execution, and promises to be glorious in its results.

Your committee cannot but contrast the advantages which the young now enjoy, with that of those who were young thirty years ago. Then it was difficult for children in country districts to procure books to read. Now they are scattered broadcast over the land, and by the munificence of the legislature are placed within the reach of every child of the state. A people so blessed must become well informed; and just in proportion as the youth of our land acquire a taste for reading and literary pursuits, just in that proportion will their desire after, and practice of, sensual and vicious pleasures decline.

The influence of good reading upon a population can not be estimated in dollars and cents. It serves to occupy leisure hours, expands the intellect, improves the manners and quickens the conscience. Already we begin to see the benign effects of it. A brighter and more glorious day dawns upon us. Thousands of our youth, who were formerly strolling the streets or lounging about, are now engaged at home conversing with the mighty dead, or the master spirits of the living. Already have the books in our libraries, and the improved teaching in our schools, awakened thought, aroused inquiry, and are calling forth the whole energies of the mind.

Without further remark, the committee recommend the adoption of the following resolutions:

Resolved, That we hail the establishment of district school libraries in our own and other states, as unequivocal tokens of human progress; and if the system becomes general and permanent, we believe it will revolutionize society, increase the productive industry of the country fourfold, elevate and strengthen the intellectual and moral power of the nation, lessen crime, promote virtue, and make America the pride and glory of the world.

Resolved, That this convention recommend that superintendents of schools guard well the district library, this avenue to the heads and hearts of the people; so that nothing shall be placed in it which shall not be salutary in its effects upon the community.

Resolved, That we recommend to the trustees of districts, to select a proper proportion of juvenile works, and also books upon the subjects of agriculture and the mechanic arts.

Resolved, That this convention recommend to the inhabitants and trustees of the several school districts in this state, annually, on or before the first Tuesday of April in each year, to make out and transmit to the town superintendent of their towns respectively, a catalogue or list of such books as they may desire to purchase for their district library, and of such articles of school apparatus as they may desire for the use of their school for the current year; with the requisite authority to such town superintendent to apply the share of library money in his hands, belonging and apportioned to such district, to the purchase of such books and apparatus.

A. WRIGHT,
L. R. PALMER,
J. O. WILLIAMS,
Committee.

REPORT ON SCHOOL CELEBRATIONS.

Among the numerous opposing influences which we encounter at almost every step, in our efforts to elevate the character of our common schools and extend their sphere of usefulness, it is believed that no one is more all-pervading and paralyzing in its effects, than the state of apathy which exists among the people in reference to this subject.

Although we are confident that much has been accomplished towards producing a more healthful state of public sentiment upon the question of educational improvement, yet we are compelled to admit that the evil of indifference still exists to a great extent. A majority of our school-houses are still its monuments; and no less palpable evidences of its prevalence and influences, are to be found in the administration of our school system, by many of our districts and their officers. We find the evidences of its existence in some form, and to a greater or less extent, in almost every school district; and every county and town superintendent can but feel that, through its influence, much of the effort now put forth in this cause, though directed by the most consummate wisdom and enlightened philanthropy, must fail of producing its desired results.

The inquiry thus addresses itself to us with peculiar force, what remedy shall we apply, or what means can we use, to remove or mitigate this evil? What measures can we take to secure the attention of the whole people to this subject? How shall we find access to their minds and hearts, and produce such a deep and universal conviction of the magnitude and importance of the interests involved in this subject, as will dissipate this apathetic indifference, enlist the interest of every citizen in behalf of the common schools, and result in universal and vigorous action for their improvement? Your committee are of the opinion that "school celebrations," in connection with the many other agencies now in operation, may con-

tribute essentially to the accomplishment of these objects.

From a careful, but somewhat limited observation of the practical results of such celebrations, your committee feel authorized to enumerate the following, as prominent among their advantages, as one of the instrumentalities by which the right spirit may be disseminated among the people upon this subject.

They present the best opportunity to urge upon the consideration of the people the subject of popular education, by addresses from school officers and the friends of education, and the most effectual method of bringing all the patrons of the schools under the influence of those addresses.

They bring before the people the actual comparative condition of their schools, and excite on the part of town officers, teachers, pupils and their parents, an active spirit of generous emulation.

They will afford the public an opportunity of forming a correct estimate of the vast difference between good and bad teachers, to canvass and determine their comparative merits, to appreciate duly the services of good teachers, and to detect those who are incompetent for the duties of their station.

The opportunity which they afford the public for witnessing the practical results of the different modes of instruction pursued, prepares the teachers and people to pass an intelligent verdict upon every question relative to the proposed improvements in the methods of teaching.

The simple announcement of the fact that such a celebration will be held in every town in the state during each term of the schools, or near the close of both the summer and winter terms, will prompt to such increased exertion on the part of teachers and pupils, to sustain the reputation of their respective schools, as cannot fail to elevate the character and rapidly advance the cause of popular instruction.

Such assemblages of parents with their children, who are soon to be the property-holders and directors, the fathers and mothers, the farmers, mechanics and business men, the citizens and legislators, the executive and judicial officers, and the future instructors of our country, convened with specific reference to their preparation for the scenes and relations of future life,—such exhibitions of our future republic in miniature, cannot fail to excite and bring into vigorous action some of the noblest and most powerful impulses of the human heart, enlist all that is noble and generous in parental affection and patriotic devotion to the welfare of posterity and the country, on the side of thorough and universal education, and awaken that deep and all-pervading interest on this subject, which, if properly directed, will result in a thorough regeneration of the whole school system.

The committee would also take the liberty of submitting to your consideration the following suggestions in relation to the management of such celebrations.

1st. The teachers who are to engage in the celebration should be consulted, and their cordial co-operation previously secured.

2d. Great care should be taken to guard against every thing which may result in the mortification or disappointment of either the teachers or their pupils; and to do this, the town superintendent and teachers should have a meeting, and, as far as possible, arrange definitely the order of exercises for the day, which should be strictly adhered to at the examination. The names of the teachers should be taken, and the particular exercise in which each is to engage should be previously determined, and the time and duration of those exercises.

3d. The exercises should be so conducted as to be fit models for general imitation in the schools.

4th. In all cases the teachers should alternate with each other at every exercise.

5th. Music by the pupils, on instruments, should be occasionally introduced between the other exercises.

6th. The use of black-boards, maps and apparatus should be as far as practicable introduced; and without a black-board, no exercises of the kind should be attempted.

7th. One address at least should be delivered to the people on all such occasions.

It is believed that by observing these or somewhat similar general rules, school celebrations may be rendered highly interesting to all concerned, and their anticipated beneficial results fully realized.

In view of these considerations, the committee would respectfully submit the following resolution:

Resolved, That we deem it an important duty of the

town and county superintendents, to make the necessary arrangements for holding at least one school celebration in each town under their supervision, near the close of the summer and winter terms, if practicable.

L. R. PALMER,)
EUGEN S. ELY,
LEMON THOMPSON,
Committee.

REPORT ON THE ORGANIZATION OF DISTRICTS.

The committee on the *Organization of School Districts* beg leave to report:

That in their opinion school districts should be so organized as to secure, if possible, the benefits of *classification* and *division* of labor. This great and important principle is recognized and practised in most, if not all the business transactions of life. Who would purchase stock in a manufacturing company whose operations were compelled by circumstances to be changed once in five or ten minutes; and to go through all the various processes necessary to be performed, from the raw material to the most finished fabrics, in the short space of three or six hours? Destructive and absurd as this appears, still many of our schools are conducted on principles analogous to it. The teacher is compelled to work from the alphabet to algebra in the short space of three hours: if to this we add the evils of a multiplicity of text-books; have we not reason to expect weak, inefficient and sickly schools? And will they not remain so unless the laws which govern mind and matter are reversed?

Your committee believe that in most cases school districts may be so organized as to secure the benefits of classification and division of labor. In cities and villages there can be no excuse for not availing ourselves of this labor saving, and consequently money saving principle. In the country, among a sparse population, your committee believe that a union of districts may be productive of good results, by having a *centre school*, and *primary schools* in the extremes, for the convenience of the smaller pupils.

Your committee will present a few of the advantages of *consolidation of districts*. It diminishes the expense and increases the efficiency of schools—it increases their libraries and funds for the purchase of apparatus—it will secure competent and permanent teachers—it will give parents an opportunity to educate their sons and daughters at home, under their own eye; to guard their physical and intellectual health, their morals and habits, and consequently their destiny for life—it will make a school good enough for the richest and cheap enough for the poorest—it opens the door to every poor man's son and daughter in the district, and tends to establish and carry out the great and glorious doctrine (so far as means and opportunity are concerned) of *equal and universal education*.

It is only by regarding the 700,000 children of this state as a unit, and looking upon this mass of mind as one, and that in fifteen years, at most, it is to control the destinies of this state, and perhaps the cause of liberty and freedom throughout the world,—that we can have clear and distinct views of the necessity of universal education.

This system adopted and carried out, gives to the poor man's children all the advantages of the rich; abolishes invidious distinctions, and is mutually beneficial to both. It is in vain that we proclaim to the world "That all men are created equal, and endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights, among which are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness;" if we by our systems of education leave any child without the proper means to qualify itself for usefulness to others, and without which he can scarcely enter into the road that leads to happiness—to such enjoyment as the great and good Creator designs to be possessed by properly educated physical, intellectual, and moral beings.

In conclusion, the committee beg leave to introduce the following resolution:

Resolved, That the union and consolidation of districts is one of the most efficient means of improving our district schools: and should be adopted in all cases where practicable.

ORSON BARNES,
E. G. SWANSON,
D. M. KIMSEY,
Committee.

REPORT ON UNION SCHOOLS.

The committee on "Union Schools" present the following report as the result of their deliberations on the propriety and utility of the establishment of union schools:

By "union schools" we mean those which are located in villages, and which are taught by two, three or more teachers.

A school of this kind should be in a building containing as many separate apartments as there are different teachers. At its head should be placed a male teacher, who should have the control and general supervision of the school. The large scholars, and those who have made the greatest proficiency in their studies, should be under the tuition of the principal. The small and less advanced scholars may be instructed by assistants.

In every village in which the number of children is too great to be instructed by one teacher, a building should be erected, containing several apartments, for the accommodation of the principal and his assistants. The scholars should be classified agreeably to their respective ages and acquirements. The union school system is also feasible in all densely populated portions of the state. Two or three small districts, which, in their separate capacity, are too weak and inefficient, may be consolidated, and thereby enjoy all the advantages and privileges of a primary and a high school.

Indeed, union schools need not, necessarily, be exclusively confined to villages and densely settled districts, but they may likewise be established in those portions of the state which are sparsely populated. If the inhabitants are scattered over too large an extent of territory to allow the small children to attend the union school, let primary schools be established in different parts of the district, which may be taught by female teachers. But the large scholars of both sexes, whose physical powers are more strongly developed than those of the small children, may attend a union school located near the centre of the district.

The committee do not deem it necessary to attempt to enumerate all the advantages which would result from the adoption of the union system: we shall only specify some of the most prominent.

1st. The adoption of this plan would secure to all, the inestimable privileges now enjoyed by our academies, without incurring those onerous expenses which so often prove ruinous to academies.

2d. Should this system be generally adopted, that formidable evil, *small districts*, which is so prevalent throughout the state, and which seems to paralyse the efforts of the friends of education, would become comparatively powerless.

3d. Parents would not be under the necessity of sending their children from home in order to obtain a good English education. Many a child has been ruined by being removed at an early age from the watchful care of the parent. No other can so easily check in children the germs of vice, and the contaminating influence of bad examples, as the parent.

4th. The aggregate expenses which are now required to maintain our schools, would be greatly diminished. To illustrate the utility and economy of the union system, let us suppose that a village contains two hundred children. If these children are taught in separate schools, four teachers at least will be required; each of whom will have fifty scholars under his tuition. Four competent male teachers can not be obtained for a less sum (including board) than \$30 per month for each. The aggregate expenses for teachers' wages would therefore be \$120 per month, and \$1,440 for a year. But, let the same village adopt the union system; let a building be erected containing several rooms, sufficiently commodious to accommodate all the scholars. A male teacher of superior qualifications may be employed to take the general supervision of the school, whose salary might be \$400 a year. And three female teachers would be required to instruct the primary classes. The wages of these three female teachers would not exceed \$600 a year; and the aggregate wages of the four teachers in the union school would be \$1,000 per annum, instead of \$1,440, which would be required under the system at present adopted by most villages and districts.

Your committee are aware that there are many other reasons and arguments which might be adduced in support of union schools, but they are satisfied that enough has been said to call the attention of the friends of education to this important subject. Believing that the cause of education would receive a new impetus,

and that more competent teachers would be secured by the adoption of union schools throughout the state, wherever feasible, your committee therefore, in conclusion, offer the following resolutions:

Resolved, That it be recommended to every village in the State, possessing a sufficient number of children, to establish a union school.

Resolved, That it be further recommended to the inhabitants of the several school districts of each town in this state, to establish and organize, under the supervision of town and county superintendents, a central high school, consisting of appropriate departments for the instruction of male and female pupils in such of the higher branches of education as may be deemed expedient.

H. H. INGRAHAM,
F. P. MOULTON,
J. O. WILLSEA.

Committee.

REPORT ON PHYSICAL EDUCATION.

The committee to whom was referred the subject of physical education, respectfully report:

That the subject is one of vast importance, wide extent, and of universal application. The free action of man's intellectual nature, and the full development of his moral powers, depends so much upon the health of his body, that it becomes an object of great interest that much care should be bestowed upon his physical part. The body is a casket, which contains a jewel of infinite value, a jewel emanating from God himself, capable of performing an immense amount of good here, and destined to exist long after the casket is broken and destroyed.

In this world the soul cannot exist if the body perishes. They are so intimately connected that if you mar the one, you injure the other.

Physical education has been too long neglected, and we have the results in the sickly countenances, the deformed bodies and the weeds of woe which we see every where around us.

There is not a question in the minds of those who have examined the subject, that a great share of the bodily suffering which we experience, is the direct or indirect result of neglecting physical education. It is believed by many physiologists, that if men would obey all the laws of their physical being, they would escape the diseases now incident to them, and when the time allotted to them had come, would, as of old, literally fall asleep, and be "gathered to their fathers."

If these things are so, how important is it that teachers understand the natural laws of God (which man must obey or suffer), and teach them to their pupils.

Without further remarks, the committee beg leave to submit the following resolutions:

Resolved, That more knowledge of the physical laws of the human body, the structure and functions of the different organs, the general laws of health and disease, must be possessed by parents and teachers, before the youth of our land shall grow up vigorous, healthy and happy.

Resolved, That as no one can transgress any of the laws of their physical being without suffering the penalty, it is of essential importance that every child be made acquainted with these laws, and taught to obey them.

Resolved, That this convention deem the elements of anatomy and physiology, studies which might with great propriety be introduced into our common schools, and especially at this time, when facilities by charts can be furnished at a very low price. And we believe a knowledge of these sciences would soon change entirely the construction of our school-houses, the modes of our dress, and our whole manner of living.

Resolved, That teachers should immediately prepare themselves to instruct in these branches of knowledge, on which so much of our happiness or misery depends.

Resolved, That as pure air, healthful exercise and cheerful hearts, are necessary to health, therefore we recommend that teachers take their pupils occasionally upon geological, mineralogical, and botanical excursions, as means well adapted not only to strengthen and develop their physical and intellectual natures,

but also improve their moral sentiments, by thus studying God's works, and leading them to
 "Look through nature up to Nature's God."

A. WRIGHT,
 F. P. MOULTON,
 D. G. WOODIN.
 Committee.

REMARKS OF HON. S. TOWN.

Mr. Town said—It is with reluctance I address you thus late in the evening. I am requested to address you on the subject of Teachers' Institutes. Time longer than I can now presume to occupy would be required for its proper discussion. I allude in commencement to the state of education as it now is and as it formerly was. The superintendents now exert a vast influence—greater indeed than any similar body in the world. Not only have they charge of the great body of the teachers, but also of the vast multitude of children in the state. Their responsibilities multiply as the numbers of those teachers and children increase. It is fifty years, lacking one, since I myself became a teacher. How wonderful the change since that early day. I will simply name one fact, and from that you may judge of others. A young man was sent to me for examination, whom I soon found to be profoundly ignorant. I put to him this question: How much would twelve fish cost if three fish cost a half penny each? He worked an hour and failed utterly to solve the problem. Dilworth's books were almost the only ones used. About forty years ago, I commenced giving public lectures on history and other branches of education. I also strove, even at that early day, to awaken an interest in female education, which was then almost wholly neglected.

In relation to the teachers' institutes. The first I ever attended was two years ago this present April. I then witnessed a sight never before seen in this country. I witnessed an assembly of one hundred teachers met for the purpose of instruction. I believe that these institutes are the opening of a new era—that they will spread from state to state and prove a mighty instrument for good to the cause of education, throughout the land. I would recommend to all the county superintendents to call a county convention of teachers every year. I would do so in conjunction with the town superintendents and other friends of education. They are just the means needed by those teachers who most require instruction, and who are least likely to get it otherwise. The great and important point is to select a competent board of instruction. The county superintendent will of course be at the head of the institution; but the board should be men of learning and acknowledged competency. Interest must be awakened in the minds of the institute, and it must be kept up throughout. I would put the government on the footing of a well regulated school. The recitations should in part be in concert and in part separate. All the exercises should be in portions. No one subject should be pursued too long. When you come to arithmetic, for example, I would divide the subject in several parts, and have separate recitations in each. In geography it is very important to have black-boards and slates, and to resort to drawing in connexion with the study. The miscellaneous exercises are numerous. Discussions should take place in the evenings on topics connected with the good management and discipline

of a school and be made the subject of remark for the instruction and benefit of all. Uniformity in teaching is the result. Time is saved and great benefit derived therefrom. One thing I have practised with surprising success. I have required the teachers to spend five minutes each morning on some historical narration for which they are to come prepared. At particular times, too, the teachers are required to lay aside their studies and relate some prominent fact of interest which has fallen under their observation.

Another important fact is that it makes the teachers acquainted with each other. Formerly, if there was a particularly good teacher, all the others in the neighborhood regarded him with jealousy. I clearly see that these institutes are preparing the way for the common school teachers of our country to become the learned men of the country. They improve upon all they have there learned, and when they come again they are prepared for fresh advances. From arithmetic they advance to algebra, surveying and geometry. They study chemistry and philosophy and geology. Thus they go on, ever increasing the stores of their knowledge. Those who are practical teachers will become the learned men of this and other states. As to lectures, we have had them on a variety of subjects, and with great profit. Particularly on history, a science whose importance is scarcely beginning to be appreciated by us. Not for the record of wars and bloodshed do we peruse its pages. But we find there the narrative of the progress of art and knowledge and of all liberal and humanizing study.

I will but allude to the close of some of these institutes and will close. I have witnessed many tender scenes of friendly parting and of the sorrow of kindred. But none have I been permitted to see more deeply and tenderly affecting than when the members of these institutes were called to separate. I shall not be able to attend many more, if any, of these institutes. My feeble health and my advanced years forbid. But I rejoice to see an army ready to bear the banner of educational progress onward to sure and speedy victory.

I have been often asked my opinion of the present system of county superintendency. I have never hesitated to answer, that I attributed all the increased efficiency of our system to that one feature in connexion with its cognate one of the superintendency of the towns. Great is your responsibility, gentlemen, and mighty is the influence you exert. The productions of men's hands will perish. But your work will remain. The minds under your influence will be and will forever continue just what you shall make them. This generation and the generations to come will take their character from your hands. As a general thing I have found the county superintendents competent men, and often almost overwhelmed with anxiety to accomplish the greatest possible good.

READING, WRITING, AND SPEAKING.—Habits of literary conversation, and still more, habits of extempore discussion in a popular assembly, are peculiarly useful in giving us a ready and practical command of our knowledge. There is much good sense in the following aphorism of Bacon. "Reading makes a full man, writing a correct man, and speaking a ready man."

PROGRESS OF EDUCATION.

COUNTY AND TOWN SUPERINTENDENTS; THEIR DUTIES, THEIR LABORS, AND THE RESULTS.

We regret that we can only give brief extracts from the proceedings of the County Institutes, of Greene and Onondaga, but the importance of the reports which crowd this number of the Journal, will, we hope, excuse us to our friends in these counties.—ED.

[From the Catskill Messenger.]

There are, we repeat, many, very many in our county, who though ostensibly in favor of the system, suffer its benefits to be felt only in part, through their want of energy. Their voices, perhaps, help to "swell the loud acclaim" when its beauties are shadowed forth by the eloquence of those who know how to realize the effects of its full and free operation, but in their proper sphere of influence, in the very spot where they can confer the most essential service in aiding this great work, to wit, their own school districts, they are palpably remiss in their duty. We would ask every parent who may chance to read this article, is the school in your district of as much importance as it should be when compared to your other business? Have you visited it at all? If so, how many times within the year? Do your children progress as rapidly as you could wish? or is this a matter of so little importance that you have never taken the trouble to inquire into it? If you cannot answer these questions satisfactorily to your own consciences, on whom can you rest the blame? We have an able, efficient and zealous county superintendent, who is laboring incessantly for the advancement of this system of education which your indifference is sadly hindering. All past experience has shown that where due attention is paid by parents to the school, and the manner in which it is conducted, children learn more readily; and common sense also teaches us (when we consider the nature of children) that the presence of parents in the school room exerts a salutary influence in stimulating them to greater exertion in the acquisition of that knowledge which is of more value than rubies. Well will it be for the children of those parents who suffer no business, however engrossing, to divert their entire attention from the school-house.

GREENE.

TEACHERS' INSTITUTE AT WINDHAM CENTRE.

The Institute was organized on the 2d day of April, under the supervision of S. R. Sweet, Principal, assisted by Albert D. Wright, Esq. Forty-four students entered their names, and the number afterwards increased to sixty-eight, mostly teachers of common schools.

The exercises of each day were commenced by reading the scriptures, singing and prayer.

The members of the Institute were arranged in two classes, and recitations were heard on each successive day during the session, in the several branches of education taught in common schools. The course of instruction was thorough and practical, and eminently calculated to prepare teachers for a uniform and proper discharge of the duties of their high and responsible vo-

cation. The more important parts of the common branches were dissected, and their principles so clearly and forcibly illustrated, that the dullest of minds could not fail to comprehend them.

Orthography and the elementary sounds of language, under the charge of Mr. Wright, received special attention. These exercises were rendered interesting and useful by the agreeable manner in which the instruction was communicated. His successful efforts in this department, evinced that scientific knowledge, and deep, philosophical research, for which he is so distinguished as an author.

Arithmetic was made a prominent study. The rules were taken up in their order, and demonstrated in a thorough analytical and logical manner, having reference to their practical application to the business of life.

English Grammar received no less attention. The principles and practice of several contemporary authors underwent the severest scrutiny. The exercises consisted of parsing, correcting false Syntax and grammatical errors which occur in daily conversation, together with discussions on disputed points in grammar. These exercises awakened a deep interest in the class. At the close of each recitation, the Institute went into a committee of the whole on each lesson; at which time the students were at liberty to ask any question in relation to the lesson which was not fully understood. These questions were first referred to the students, and lastly to the teachers. Answers were then given with such explanations and illustrations as were deemed necessary. In connexion with this general exercise, which occurred twice a day, three students were appointed on the preceding day to lecture on different topics, having reference to the subject immediately before the class. Students took a deep interest in this exercise, and frequently acquitted themselves with much ability.

Geography and Geology received considerable attention. Among the exercises in Geography, map drawing, on the black-board, was one of the most prominent. The student was required to give a minute description of the state or country drawn, setting forth its situation—its boundaries—its natural and political divisions, &c. A description of the state of New-York, given by a lady from the town of Hunter; by request, has been handed in in writing; and I sincerely regret that our limits preclude its publication. It was an eloquent and graphic description of the Empire State. There were other descriptions given, perhaps no less worthy of commendation.

Composition and declamation contributed much to the interest and usefulness of the school.

Reading and Elocution, under the charge of Mr. Sweet, received that attention their importance demands. It may with propriety be said of him, that he is master of the subject. Every effort was made to correct erroneous habits of articulation and pronunciation—to strengthen the vocal organs—to cultivate and improve the taste, and enable the pupil to read with beauty, force, and variety. An improvement was made in this branch, rarely equalled in the same length of time.

Evening sessions were held by the Institute, at which time discussions were had on various

questions connected with teaching, school discipline and management, in which teachers and students participated. These discussions on all occasions elicited a large and respectable audience, and were frequently conducted in a manner highly interesting and entertaining.

At the close of the Institute, able and interesting lectures were given by Messrs. Wright and Sweet, and were received by a crowded audience with applause.

The exercises were concluded by the adoption of a series of resolutions, indicative, among other things, of the high sense entertained by the students of the utility of the Teachers' Institute, which had just closed its session, and recommended the organization of another in the ensuing fall.

J. OLNEY,
C. Sup't.

[For the District School Journal.]

ONONDAGA.

TEACHERS' INSTITUTE—SPRING TERM, 1845.

The Institute convened on the 14th of April, at the school-house of district No. 4, Syracuse. E. W. Curtis was chosen chairman, and William Barnes and N. Palmer Stanton, Jr., secretaries. The convention consisted of one hundred and fourteen members, from this and six other counties.

The session has been highly interesting, and will be long remembered by the teachers of Onondaga. Our exercises were of two kinds, *discussions and illustrations* at the black-board, and by classes, of the various methods of teaching; besides lectures.

Committees were appointed upon the following, among other subjects: On Geography, History, Grammar, Orthography, School Apparatus, Vocal Music, Alphabet, Arithmetic, Government, &c., Elocution, &c., General Subject of Education, District School Journal, Reading, Organization, Spelling and Defining, Mineralogy, Linear and Perspective Drawing, Composition, County Superintendents, Moral Education.

During the session, the following Addresses were delivered: On Geography, by Dr. A. P. Adams; on Moral Education, by Rev. J. Castleton, of Syracuse; on Botany, by W. H. Seram, of Syracuse; on Orthography, by David Parsons, of Syracuse; on Astronomy, by Miss More and Butin, of Fabius; on Penmanship, by Freeman Sherbrook, of Syracuse; on Elocution, by Samuel Niles Sweet, author of Sweet's Elocution; on Education, by James Henry, Jr., County Superintendent of Herkimer; on a Chart, called the "Dial of the Seasons," by Thomas Fisher, of Philadelphia; on Geography and the study of Outline Maps, by J. H. Mather, of Hartford, Conn.; on Elocution, by Dr. Andrew Comstock, of Philadelphia; author of "Comstock's Elocution;" on Reading, and her series of Reading Books, by Eliza Robbins, of N. Y. City; on her History and Chronological Charts, by Celestia Bloss, of Rochester; on the Elementary Sounds, by Albert D. Wright, of Verona, author of Wright's Orthography; on Grammar, by David Parsons; on Mental Arithmetic, by Enoch S. Ely, County Superintendent of Erie; on his Grammar, by Rev. Bradford Frazee, of Philadelphia; on his series of

Reading Books, by Lyman Cobb, of N. Y. City; on Winchester's Penmanship, by J. H. Mather, of Conn.; on his School Apparatus and Natural Sciences, &c., by Josiah Holbrook, of N. Y. City; on several Text Books, by Asher L. Smith, of N. Y. City; on Text Books, &c., by O. O. Wickham, N. Y. City.

Short Addresses on educational subjects were delivered by Rev. Samuel J. May, late of Mass.; Dr. Wright, County Superintendent of Washington; E. J. Shumway, County Superintendent of Essex; S. W. Seton, of N. Y. City; Mr. Mann, County Superintendent of Monroe; I. F. Mack, City Superintendent of Rochester, and J. O. Wilsea, County Superintendent of Orleans.

The following resolutions, generally accompanied by reports from committees appointed for that purpose, were adopted:

Resolved, That disease is the result of defective physical education; ignorance, of defective intellectual education; vice and crime, of defective moral education: therefore, Education, Physical, Intellectual, and Moral, is the remedy for most if not all the evils that afflict mankind.

Resolved, That we consider kindness a necessary ingredient in the discipline of schools, and we will endeavor to act upon the principle as far as possible; never inflicting corporal punishment only in extreme cases, and as a *derriere resort*.

Resolved, That we highly approve of the bill introduced by Mr. Brown, entitled, "An act in relation to Teachers' Institutes."

Resolved, That we consider the District School Journal ably conducted and filled with matter important and indispensable to the teacher; and that a committee of four be appointed to procure subscribers for the same.

Resolved, That this Institute regards the elementary sounds of the English language as the foundation of the science and art of reading and speaking *well*; and that we recommend the introduction of elocutionary charts as being very convenient, especially for the purpose of teaching phonology *in concert*.

Resolved, That the study of the elementary principles of arithmetic should be early commenced by the pupil, and illustrated throughout by means of tangible objects; we regard the black-board as indispensable in teaching this science.

Resolved, That we regard the office of County Superintendent as eminently calculated to advance the cause of education, and the efforts made for its abolishment as destructive to the best interests of society.

Resolved, That we consider vocal music as a valuable branch of common school education.

Resolved, That the practice too commonly pursued of dividing pupils into apartments by sexes, is detrimental to the social, intellectual, moral and religious character of such pupils.

Resolved, That in teaching reading we recommend, 1st. Lessons so short as to be fully within the comprehension of the pupil. 2d. That a pupil be not allowed to pass over a lesson until he can read it correctly and understand thoroughly the ideas therein contained. 3rd. Pointing out errors by occasionally imitating the style of the pupil, and then giving examples of correct reading. 4th. Frequent practice of concert reading.

Resolved, That we recommend the following methods of teaching Spelling and Defining: 1st. Allowing no pupil to read what he does not understand. 2d. Giving the pupil words and requesting the next morning the correct spelling and definition. 3rd. Selecting words from a sentence; forming sentences from words given by the teacher. 5th. Sentence, slate, concert and column spelling.

Resolved, That as members of the Normal Institute, we tender to the County and Town Superintendents, our sincere thanks for the interest they have taken in our welfare as teachers, and the demonstrations of sympathy they have made us in the closing interview of our session; and that we pledge to them our faithful co-operation, in perfecting and carrying out any measure calculated to advance the interests of education.

Among the distinguished visitors of our Institute, were some thirty County Superintendents, George B. Emerson, of Boston; Ira Mayhew, Superintendent of Common Schools in Michigan; Henry Barnard, Superintendent of Rhode Island.

The Secretaries were directed to publish a condensed report of the proceedings in the District School Journal and county newspapers.

Adjourned to the first Monday of October next.

E. W. CURTIS, *Chairman*.

WILLIAM BARNES, }
N. P. STANTON, Jr., } *Secretaries*.

[For the Journal.]

SOMETHING WORTH TELLING.

FRIEND DWIGHT:—While visiting schools a few days since in the town of Andover, I attended a district school meeting unlike any I ever attended before. The meeting was called for the purpose of deliberating upon the expediency of changing the site of the school-house, building a new one, raising a tax, &c. I arrived in company with the town superintendent, at the old school-house soon after the meeting was organized, expecting to find the school in session; not having been informed of the meeting. As is the case in all such meetings, there were local interests, and some had come with the hope of getting the new site in one place and some in another; but after deliberating a short time, all differences of opinion were given up and a site was unanimously agreed upon; (one acre of ground, instead of crowding it into the wheel rut.) The construction of the house was agreed upon, the amount of tax necessary to build it, the job let, and all the necessary resolutions passed without a negative vote! Upwards of thirty voters were in attendance, (all in the district,) and every man voted for every resolution! This augurs well for the interests of the school, and I venture to predict that whoever visits that district one year hence, will find a very different school from any ever yet had there. We challenge the state to produce a parallel to the above.

Respectfully and truly yours,

R. H. SPENCER,
County Superintendent.

SCHOOLS OF SYRACUSE.

THE friends and advocates of popular education, in western New York, insulated, in some degree, from the great Atlantic cities, are more remarkable for their ardency and enterprise, than for high intellectual acquirements. They have, in many instances, struggled through the most vexatious and discouraging difficulties, to excite an interest for their high enterprise, in that grade of society which is usually supposed to monopolize the intelligence of our country. The greatest embarrassment has arisen, from the stigma which the cause of education has endured from the *elite* of town and country. The *soi-disant* learned professions, have almost universally, afforded it little, or at most, but nominal support, either from its limited sphere of action, or the unpromising nature of the subject, for the display of talent. Happy for its ultimate success, perhaps, that it has been so—its friends are universally its friends in heart and principle.

Mediocrity of talent, combined with good sense, seeks no opportunities for display, and the humble advocates of popular education, in western New York, conscious of the truth of this theory, enter upon the field of labor, with noble and exalted principles, desiring truth more than applause, and its success, more than the gratification of selfish wishes. I sincerely believe, that in no other cause of moral or intellectual reform, can be found so many ardent and disinterested advocates, as in that of popular education.

Of the difficulties which attend the progress of educational reform, its friends at Syracuse have encountered their share. Almost all the effects which have followed the exertions of laborers in the sacred cause, have been produced by unconnected individual labors. Until very recently, the immense aid which may be expected from combinations of talent and knowledge, in those exciting and spirit cheering associations of teachers and friends, had not been brought successfully into action.

The advocates of universal education, have labored faithfully and energetically, in the performance of their duties, but almost entirely insulated and unconnected with each other. Still the mighty spirit was in existence, though feeble, and ignorant of its power, as a sleeping giant. For several years previous to any united public action upon the subject, there had existed in Syracuse, many of those nominal friends of democratic education, who with kind, philanthropic natures, saw that the education of the mass, was a good subject for speculative theory, but had too much *mental inertia*, to attempt the great reform which was necessary, to extend its benefits to the most needy, and most neglected portion of our population.

Few, if any, of the patrons of common schools, were of that grade who could more than afford the pittance which was demanded for the services of the teachers of those days, and those whose interests were associated with schools of the supposed higher class, could not be expected, amid the gloom of ignorance which enveloped the subject, to give the weight of their influence to its advancement. Consequently, little was thought, and less expected, of common schools.

Previous to 1842, there were in Syracuse, with

a population of 7000, but two buildings, which might properly be termed school-houses, and one only of these, was adapted to the necessities—without mentioning the comforts—of such a building. There were then, according to the report of D. C. LeRoy, Esq., 1600 children within the extremes of age stipulated by law for the receipt of public money, residing within the limits of Syracuse. 600 of these, (I speak in round numbers, for the precise ones have escaped my memory,) never attended any school, public or private, and so lax were many respectable families, in requiring the attendance of their children at school, that a great proportion of the remainder were absent half or three fourths of the school session.

One of the school-houses was an elegant building, of Doric structure, having of course but one floor, for the accommodation of pupils, and was usually attended by 150 pupils. This was occupied, for three years, by Mr. Salisbury, a gentleman who has done honor, even to his high profession, and who, since the extensive enlargement of his house, continues to retain the confidence and respect of his patrons and friends. The other building which retained the qualifications to be termed a school-house, was capable of accommodating two departments, by inhaling one within a dark and damp cellar, which excluded the cheerful light of day, and must have had a remarkable effect in repressing that hilarity in the pupils, which is so annoying to nervous teachers.

There was still another house, that was erected in 1827, and which was worthy of preservation from the novelty of its style. It was capable of containing comfortably, seventy pupils, but one hundred frequently attended, and found the hot breath of disease, in the sweltering atmosphere of a house, for the ventilation of which, the intelligence of the age had made no provision.

Finally, within the village proper, there was a school *without a house*, and a strange story might be related by a fanciful historian, of the wanderings of this migratory, mendicant school. At one time, we find it located temporarily, in a lower story of a public house, like the errant professors of the now declining art of mending broken spoons and crockery;—and surrounded by the brawl and confusion of dram drinking, the arrival and departure of noisy travellers, and their lumbering vehicles. At another period of its purgatorial wanderings, according to the relation of Mr. Edwards, county superintendent, the school of 50 pupils, was found cowering like objects of persecution, in a crazy loft, above a machine shop, containing a steam engine, several turning lathes, and other unquiet machinery, between which and the school, was an apology for a floor, of loose boards, which vibrated at every motion of the animate or inanimate machines. There was apparently, says the narrator, a great emulation between the pupils, engines and workmen, to produce the greatest confusion, and it required delicate perceptive faculties, to decide which succeeded.

Some effort had been made for the improvement of this unpromising state of things, previous to 1842, but was attended with little apparent success. It was very difficult to persuade many of the intelligent and benevolent, of the utility of large provisions for general education,

notwithstanding the entire success of the different and conflicting schemes which have been adopted in the cities and large towns of our own and sister states. Time has discovered the fact, that the particular scheme of education, whether originating with Bell or Lancaster, whether supported by voluntary patronage or property taxes, has but little effect upon its utility, if but entered upon with spirit, and sustained by active and enterprising measures. Much interest had been aroused by the frequent associations of teachers and superintendents in this year, and men of intelligence soon began to engage their influence upon the side of popular education, though slowly and with caution, seldom identifying themselves openly with its interests, though a surprising change took place in the feelings of the community in general, with regard to common schools. Pupils were put in attendance upon them, who had stoutly resisted the improving influence of select schools, and their parents and more particularly the public, were astonished to find that they were not irremediable dunces.

From this time, a vast stride was made in the progress of liberal and enlightened sentiments upon this subject. Other measures than the mere expenditure of money, were extensively discussed, and even this, the severest test of liberal principles, was considered a secondary measure in importance. In 1843, a spell of magic power, was laid upon the unhappy spirit of our wandering school, and the village was no longer haunted by its spectral visitations. It now took its permanent abode in a neat, pretty house, erected for its reception, and eventually proved, under the tuition of its intelligent teacher, Mr. Sloane, to have a very respectable and happy corporal existence. As if it had needed but the exorcism of this ghostly school, for the complete ascendancy of the star of education, five very handsome houses, including the one just noticed, were erected within the short space of a single year, and promising signs of a sixth appeared. They were constructed at an aggregate expense of \$10,000, and with provisions for the accommodation of 2000 pupils.

So far have I traced the progress of educational reform in Syracuse, without intending that my description should reach its present extent, as it is only prefatory to a subject which would be far more valuable and interesting, in other hands. I refer to the peculiarities of discipline, tuition, and arrangement, which mark our schools, a description of which, would afford much valuable information, from a more worthy pen than mine.

ONONDAGA.

A. EDWARDS, Esq.—Dear Sir:—The interesting manner in which some of the schools close in Pompey, is highly commendable, and clearly shows that your labors in this part of the county are well appreciated. I was present at an examination in District No. 8.—Mr. JOSEPH C. ARNOLD, teacher—which richly deserves a far better report than I can possibly give in the brief account which follows.

Mr. Arnold has a private Library, to which his scholars have had access, besides his room is adorned with a great variety of mottoes of a very impressive character, together with an extensive assortment of maps and charts, and a fine Globe, a complete apparatus for teaching the application and use of the different weights and measures, the square and cube roots, &c.—all of which greatly facilitates the task of teaching, and ren-

der his illustrations tangible to the capacities of all ages.

The morning exercises were commenced by singing, accompanied by a band of musicians, composed of scholars who have been under his instruction within the course of his teaching in this district, this being the close of the fifth winter term kept by him. After which, his school was exercised in Orthography—his 2d and 3d class in Grammar—a juvenile class in Arithmetic, through division and problems solved on the black-board, much to the gratification and satisfaction of all present. Then came exercises by the whole school on the historical chart. A class in Philosophy and Algebra were exercised, that evinced a knowledge of those important branches, which did honor to themselves and to their teacher.

The afternoon exercises commenced before a crowded house by singing appropriate pieces, and "music from the band." Secondly, Grammar by his first class, and Arithmetic by his juvenile class, followed by Astronomy in short, and Geography and map drawing on slates and the black-board from memory. The answers were readily given and the maps drawn with a despatch, readiness and correctness, seldom equalled or witnessed. Then came hard solutions in mental Arithmetic (Colburn's) by the whole school, which were wrought in the mind with astonishing rapidity and correctness—followed by the solutions of problems (with which the scholars were not acquainted,) in the different rules of arithmetic, which were performed with readiness, and the principles on which they were done clearly elucidated. When some cheering pieces were performed by his master, singers, with musical accompaniments. In conclusion, came his several reading classes, singly and in concert, with proper loudness and correct modulation of voice. Correct answers were given to questions on the subjects of their pieces and the rules and principles of correct reading and elocution. When specimens of improvement in penmanship and drawing were exhibited, from which some of those gentlemen who keep writing schools, and gull an unsuspecting community, would do well to take lessons in practical penmanship. Appropriate remarks were made by teachers and friends of education, who were present. Mr. Arnold made some happy remarks in conclusion. A number of gentlemen and ladies, so essential to add zest on such occasions, were present from other towns. Among whom I noticed Mr. Chase, and in company with him, Mr. French, town superintendent of Tully. The afternoon exercises were closed by singing, in a masterly style, some of their best pieces, and music from the band.

The exercises of the evening—compositions and declamation—were no less interesting than the previous exhibitions of the day. The whole school, though wearied by the fatigues of the day and a crowded house, appeared buoyant and happy.

To solace the weary—to allay the sensations of a vibrating nerve—to smooth a trickling chill and quiet a palpitating heart, a piece from his choir, followed by a few sweet strains and voluptuous swells from the band were all that was necessary, when the compositions came off in their original simplicity and beauty, and declamation without hesitancy or stammering. Mr. Arnold with his usual courtesy, very generously omitted a part of his evening exercises, to give other teachers an opportunity to call on their schools for singing, declamation, &c., among whom were Mr. Gifford, Mr. Van Brocklin, with other noted teachers and schools. The whole concluded with singing by request a second time, "The Old Granite State."

For the spirited manner in which Mr. Arnold has conducted his school—for his indefatigable zeal—unremitting assiduity—unbounded patience and untiring application and introduction of the most approved modern style of teaching—he was presented with a "dress coat," in addition to \$17 per month for five months, and a liberal remuneration for teaching a writing school of some fifty scholars.

Yours, &c.,

AN OBSERVER.

Pompey, April, 1843.

ADVANCEMENT IN PUBLIC INSTRUCTION.

BY D. P. PAGE.

HAVING dared to assume for the teachers of the present day some moderate degree of superiority over their predecessors even of no very remote age, it will reasonably be expected of me that I

should intimate in what particulars such superiority consists. From this task I shall not shrink. In few words, I should say it consists in a more philosophical preparation for their duties, and in a more thorough knowledge of the principles of the branches to be taught. Teaching was formerly entered upon by most aspirants to office, without reflection as to the nature of the responsibilities assumed, or a clear perception of the importance of being specially furnished for one of the most delicate and difficult offices—that of operating upon the human intellect. It is true that very many in former times entered upon the responsibilities of teaching, as they "let themselves out" to perform manual labor, having a view, almost entirely, to the recompense; and apparently without the least suspicion that higher qualifications were necessary for the one employment more than for the others. They could, perhaps, follow the formal letter of a book upon a given branch, but they knew but little of the *why* and the *wherefore*, and they knew still less of the most successful methods of reaching and interesting the minds of the pupils, and exciting in them the spirit of inquiry. It is very much to be doubted whether one in a score of the common class of the teachers twenty-five years ago, had any higher ideas of an education, than the storing up in the memory of a collection of facts—which would constitute, as far as it went, a certain amount of knowledge. They seemed, at least, never to have dreamed that truly educating a mind consists first in inspiring it with a *thirst for improvement—growth—enlargement*; and then in *disciplining its powers* so far, that with the ordinary means it could go on to improve itself. They seemed not to consider that much more depends upon the formation of correct habits of study—of reasoning and of invention, than upon the amount of knowledge which can be imparted in a given time.

I dare say many of us remember the manner in which any developments of the spirit of inquiry were wont to be treated in our schoolboy days. I may never forget the passage I first made through the *Rule of Three*, and the manner in which my manifold perplexities respecting "direct and inverse" proportion were solved. "Sir," said I, after puzzling a long time over "more requiring more, and less requiring less"—"Will you tell me why I sometimes multiply the *second and third terms* together, and divide by the first—and at other times multiply the first and second, and divide by the third?" "Why because 'more requires more' and sometimes it requires less—to be sure. Haven't you read the rule, my boy?" "Yes sir, I can repeat the rule, but I don't understand it." "Why, it is because 'more requires more and less requires less'!" "But why sir, do I multiply as the rule says?" "Why, because 'more requires more and less requires less,'—see, the rule says so." "I know the rule says so, but I wished to understand why—" "Why? why?" looking at me as if idocy itself trembled before him—"why? why because the rule says so, don't you see it?"—"More requires more and less requires less,"—and in the midst of this inexplicable combination of more and less, I shrunk away to my seat, to follow the rule because "it said so," and when I had wrought out all the

problems and got the answers without comprehending a single step in the process, I was told that I was a very good scholar,—and to be sure I did not go unrewarded; for at the examination a few weeks after, the visitors were told that I had been through the Rule of Three; and as proof of my proficiency, I was called upon to recite the very rule, which I did, not failing to lay all suitable emphasis upon "more requiring more and less requiring less."

[To be continued.]

We hope that this "call" will be answered by a general assembling of Teachers from every part of the State. Great good must result from the deliberate and intelligent action of those who are practically acquainted with the difficulties which often embarrass the best schools, and who are so deeply interested in the progress of the great cause of education.—Ep.

TEACHERS' STATE CONVENTION.

At a regular meeting of the Albany County Teacher's Association, held on the 29th of March last, a resolution was introduced and passed unanimously, that in their opinion the time has arrived when a Teachers' State Convention is desirable.

A committee of five was appointed for the purpose of corresponding with teachers, and other friends of education, in order to ascertain the feeling with regard to such a meeting; and to take such measures as may appear the most desirable for holding the same, provided our friends should agree with us that it is called for. The committee accordingly issued a circular, and sent it throughout the State. Returns have been received from several counties, in which we have the views of teacher's institutes, associations &c.; and all are unanimously in favor of the call for a convention.

At a meeting of the committee, held in this city on the 7th inst., it was resolved unanimously, that a call be issued for a Teachers' State Convention—that the meeting be held at Syracuse, on Wednesday the 30th day of July next, at 10 o'clock A. M., and continued the following day.

The committee would respectfully call upon all friendly to our objects, to contribute their influence to promote the interests of the proposed meeting. This convention is looked for with great interest from all parts of the State, and unless we greatly mistake, it will be large, and full of interest, and the result tell well for the cause. All teachers, public and private, and others interested in this great and good work, are cordially invited to meet with us, and lend their aid. Several addresses will be delivered, and discussions held on the most important educational subjects. Thus an opportunity will offer by which we may become acquainted—and by an interchange of views, the wisdom and experience of the practical educator become the common property of all.

In behalf of the committee:

J. W. BULKLEY, Chairman

ALBANY, JUNE 12, 1845.

[If Editors throughout the State friendly to the cause, will confer a favor by publishing this card.]

OFFICIAL.

STATE OF NEW-YORK—SECRETARY'S OFFICE.
DEPARTMENT OF COMMON SCHOOLS.

Albany, July 1, 1845.

The CLERKS of the several school districts are hereby requested, on or before the 15th of July inst., to furnish the Town Superintendent of the town in which the school-house of their district is located, a written statement showing the number of scholars in their district whose parents have been exempted by the Trustees, from the payment of teachers' wages, and the aggregate amount of such exemptions charged upon the district, during the year ending on the 1st inst.

The TOWN SUPERINTENDENTS of the several towns will, as soon as they shall have received the requisite information from the clerks of the several school districts as above specified, transmit an abstract thereof, showing the aggregate result of such statements to the COUNTY SUPERINTENDENT of the county or section to which their towns respectively belong; and such COUNTY SUPERINTENDENTS are hereby directed to make and forward to this department, by mail, on or before the first day of September next, an abstract of such statements so received from the Town Superintendents respectively, containing the aggregate result and sum total in each town in his county or section, specifying the towns, of the number of scholars, whose parents were so exempted, and the total amount chargeable to the several districts, in separate columns.

The Superintendent respectfully urges on the several officers charged with the execution of this circular, the importance of promptitude and accuracy in furnishing the desired information in season to enable it to reach the Department by the time specified. If there are any districts in which the Trustees have failed to conform to the provisions of the statute in regard to the exemption of such children of indigent parents, within their jurisdiction, the District Clerk or Town Superintendent will please report the number of such district and the names of the defaulting Trustees.

N. S. BENTON, Supt. Com. Schools.

TO THE COUNTY SUPERINTENDENTS.

A box containing the requisite number of copies of the Annual Report of the Superintendent for the present year, to supply each of the School District Libraries under your supervision respectively, and also of blank reports for the several Town Superintendents, has been forwarded to the County Clerk of your County, subject to your order. You will please immediately take charge of the same, and make the necessary distribution to the Town Superintendents, for delivery to the Librarians of the several Districts, without unnecessary delay, taking receipts from such Town Superintendents containing an undertaking to place the books in the possession of the several Librarians within thirty days from the date of such receipt. The Department will expect the County Superintendent personally to see to such delivery, in every case where such written undertaking is not entered into by the Town Superintendent.

N. S. BENTON,
Superintendent Common Schools.